ChildAIDS

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NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL FORUM ON AIDS AND CHILDREN

PIE IN THE SKY?

The community care reforms come into effect on April 1st. Huw Meredith of the National AIDS Trust looks at how services to children affected by HIV might fare in the new climate.

Results of a survey published recently by the Association of Directors of Social Services showed that funding for 1993-94 is far from adequate, and up to 80% of local authorities may be forced to cut their existing social services budgets. In spite of reassurances from the Department of Health, many voluntary organisations and service users fear that adequate services will simply not be available after April. What chance does new provision for children affected by HIV stand in all this?.

Recent legislation could in fact have been tailor-made to address the needs of such children. The NHS and Community Care Act 1990 emphasises full consultation with service users, engaging them directly in the process of needs assessment in developing care packages. It also encourages cross-agency collaboration, important where a dozen or more different professionals may be involved with a family. It requires that separate assessments are made of the person who is ill, and those looking after them. This is vital to ensure that any package of care meets the needs of the whole family including the children.

In tandem with this, the Children Act 1989 again encourages collaboration and multidisciplinary planning, and emphasises a child-centred approach, consulting to ascertain the child's own view about what is happening. The requirement under section 17 to deliver services to "children in need", represents a clear duty to put help into a family where a young person needs it.

Against this framework, we might expect to be entering a new era of innovative, child-centred, and user friendly service provision. But Les Woods, HIV Adviser to the Local Government Management Board, warns: *"As community care funding will already be inadequate for baseline work, it's pie in the sky to expect the kind of child-centred initiatives we might once have hoped for".* Pressed to elaborate, he added sadly: *"The budgets are already too low, and are being cut further. That's about all I can say, really".*

A meeting convened by the National Forum on AIDS and Children last month confirmed worries about the real readiness to embrace these new ways of working. Agencies set up with aspirations to develop new services geared to HIV reported they are drawn into mainstream provision because existing services are being run down. Activities such as escorting children to and from school, previously accepted as a statutory responsibility, are now making huge demands on voluntary agencies in some areas, and with limited resources often relying on volunteers, they are hard-pressed to provide the continuity of care which is required by a high quality service.

Even schemes funded specifically by the Department of Health to develop innovative responses under Section 17 - such as the new Barnardo's programme in the North West for children whose parents are ill or disabled - *"find ourselves under pressure from day one simply to meet the shortfalls under Community Care"*, according to co-ordinator Sandra Bilsborrow. *"It's going to be incredibly hard to maintain the child-centred impetus against that kind of pressure".*

Amongst those involved with children and HIV there is ongoing discussion about models of good practice. However unless a clearer lead comes from the Department about funding resources and integrating planning under the Children Act and Community Care, we are likely to spend a lot of time arguing about the colour of the icing, only to discover we have no cake.

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NATIONAL FORUM ON AIDS AND CHILDREN

The National Forum on AIDS and Children brings together organisations concerned with children infected or affected by HIV, from both the voluntary and statutory sectors.

The Forum aims to promote the interests and welfare of children and young people in relation to HIV/AIDS issues by:

- *promoting an effective voice for children.*
- *providing a national resource and data-base.*
- *disseminating information about good practice.*
- *promoting research and training.*
- *identifying un-met needs and promoting service development.*
- *campaigning and lobbying, representing members' views to government, media and outside bodies.*

ChildAIDS, the newsletter of the National Forum on AIDS and Children, is published quarterly. Views expressed in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Forum as a whole.

Contributions of articles, materials for review, or any relevant information, are welcomed and should be sent to the editor, **Neil Orr**, at the following address.

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The powerful voice of the child

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PROGRESS REPORT

The National Forum on AIDS and Children has made considerable progress since it was launched in April 1992. The Forum now brings together more than fifty organisations, including representatives from health services, social services, children's agencies, and user groups.

The Forum holds regular meetings, which provide an opportunity for those involved with children and HIV to exchange information and experiences, and to discuss relevant issues. For example, the Forum has discussed developing a child-centred approach in HIV-related services, and looked at what information sources are available for children and for professionals working in this field.

A major project for the Forum in 1992 was to respond to the Department of Health's draft Guidance for local authorities on HIV and children. A special meeting of Forum members was held to discuss this document, and our written comments positively influenced the content of the final Guidance (published in December 1992). More recently a meeting of interested Forum members was held to discuss problems around the availability of HIV childcare services.

Information officer

With funding from a number of charitable trusts, Neil Orr was appointed as part time information officer for the Forum in August 1992. In addition to servicing the Forum, the role of the information officer is to ensure that the work of the Forum is guided by up-to-date knowledge, and to disseminate the results of the Forum's work along with other relevant information about HIV and children. Such information will be made available through the ChildAIDS newsletter, information sheets, and other publications. A database of resources and services is also being established.

Future Programme

The Forum is co-ordinated by a steering group of Forum members, which is currently identifying a detailed programme of work for 1993 and beyond. It is proposed to establish working groups to look at two topics:

Children's rights: children have rights as users of services, as parties in fostering cases, as carers of parents or siblings, and so on. The Forum needs to make links with existing work on children's rights, and develop policy and guidelines relating to all of these areas.

Practice standards: in spite of guidance which is now available via legislation, agencies previously used to dealing with adult clients are beginning to work with families, often unaware of the particular considerations entailed in this. Voluntary organisations also need more help about issues relevant to them, such as training, using volunteers, etc. Some Forum members have begun to examine these issues in detail, and propose to make this work a part of the Forum's programme.

Each working group will include interested Forum members, but will also draw on relevant experience from beyond the Forum. The groups will meet for a limited period of time with the aim of producing reports that will feedback into the wider Forum. The focus will be on ways in which real improvements can be made in the delivery of services to children infected or affected by HIV.

U.K. NEWS

□ THOMAS COURTNEY AND WOMB

A Harley Street doctor recently jailed for raping women visiting his surgery had previously set up a charity supposedly for HIV positive pregnant women and children. Dr Thomas Courtney, jailed for seven years at the end of November 1992, established WOMB (Welfare of Mothers and Babies) and appeared on television to promote it. But according to Julian Meldrum of the National AIDS Trust, there was no evidence that any of the support schemes he publicised actually existed: *"His operation consisted of an office, a couch, a name plate and himself".*

source: *the Guardian* 1 Dec 1992, *New Statesman* 4 Dec 1992.

□ NEW MILDMAY SERVICES

The Mildmay Mission Hospital is to open its new day nursery for children affected by HIV on March 22nd. The nursery will be open for three days a week, and transport will be provided for children.

Mildmay's Family Service Unit, which will offer combined palliative care for parents and children, is due to open in September 1993. Baroness Cumberlege will lay the foundation stone for the Unit on March 24th.

Details from: Mildmay Mission Hospital, Hackney Road, London E2 7NA (tel. 071 739 2331).

□ SOLAS FOR CHILDREN

Creche failities at SOLAS, Edinburgh's support centre for people living with HIV and AIDS, are now open from 11 - 4 pm four days a week for children aged 6 and under. A group for older children meets on Wednesday evenings. During school holidays, various activities are arranged for children, including trips and art workshops.

Details from: Nichola Frith, Play Development Worker, SOLAS, 2/4 Abbeymount, Edinburgh EH8 8EJ (tel. 031 661 0982).

□ RISE IN HIV AMONGST GAY TEENAGERS

A recently published study shows that in 1991, nearly one in twenty gay men aged 19 or under who had HIV-tests were found to be HIV-positive. The rate of 4.7%, compared with between 2.1% and 2.7% from 1987 to 1990, suggests that HIV transmission amongst young gay men is increasing.

There were 27 newly diagnosed cases of HIV amongst gay men aged 19 or under in 1991 (in addition to 136 such cases between 1985 and 1990). This reflects a general increase in the number of cases of HIV in men having sex with men, after several years of decline: there were 1,526 new cases in 1991, the highest number since 1987.

Evans, BG et al (1993), Sexually transmitted diseases and HIV-1 infection among homosexual men in England and Wales, *British Medical Journal*, 426-8, Feb 13

□ TOO DEAR TO VISIT

Contact a Family (who provide support for families caring for children with special needs), together with Action for Sick Children, have launched the Too Dear to Visit campaign. It aims to persuade the Government to establish a fund out of which hospitals may reimburse families with travel expenses incurred when visiting their children in hospital.

Further information from: Contact a Family, 16 Strutton Ground, London SW1P 2HP (tel. 071 222 2695).

STATISTICS UPDATE

- As of 31 October 1992 there had been 421 reports of **HIV in children aged 14 years or under** in the UK (267 of these children are believed to have been infected as a result of receiving infected blood or blood products). 118 had developed AIDS, of whom 55 have died.

Public Health Laboratory Service, 25 Jan 1993.

- By January 31st 1993, there had been 563 reports of **children being born to HIV positive mothers** in the UK and Ireland (254 in the Thames Regions, 89 in the rest of England, Wales, and N. Ireland, 135 in Scotland, and 85 in the Irish Republic). Of these, 183 are known to be infected with HIV, 200 are uninfected, and 180 are of indeterminate status.

National Study of HIV in Pregnancy, March 1993.

- No national figures are available for the number of **children living in a family affected by HIV**. A study carried out in Lothian found that a sample of 110 injecting drug users infected with HIV had 119 children, 60 of whom were dependent (i.e. less than 16 years old and living with a parent).

Extrapolating to the Lothian population of people known to be HIV positive through injecting drug use, the authors estimate that *"in Lothian about 250 children- the vast majority not infected with HIV- are likely to suffer the death of one or both parents due to disease related to HIV in the near future; this figure is probably an underestimate as it represents only the tested population".*

Ronald, PJM et al (1993), Children of parents infected with HIV in Lothian, *British Medical Journal*, 649-50, 6 March

- It has been estimated that by the end of 1992, 1.1 million **children had been infected with HIV worldwide**, and that by 1995 over 10 million children will have been infected.

Mann, J (1993) *AIDS in the world*

NEW PUBL

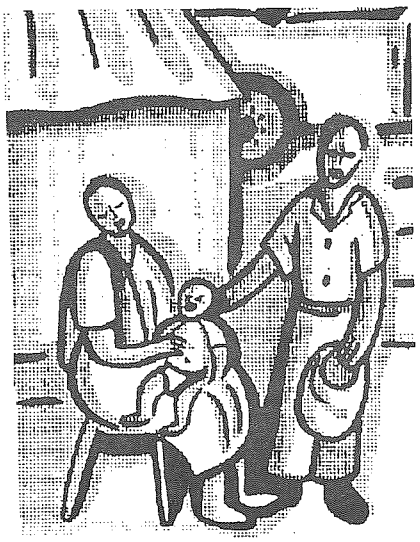
• **We miss you all - Noerine Kaleeba: AIDS in the family.**
In this inspiring book, Noerine Kaleeba gives an account of the impact of AIDS on her family in Uganda, and of her work with TASO (The AIDS Support Organisation), of which she is now director. AIDS has already claimed the lives of her husband, along with many friends and relatives. In the midst of these personal tragedies, she helped to establish the first community response to AIDS in Uganda, a project that now provides support to thousands of people living with the virus.

Noerine discusses the effect of the epidemic on her own and other children. In Uganda, children whose parents have died tend to be looked after by other family members (as well as her own four daughters, Noerine is now looking after her late sister's three children). AIDS has placed a great strain on these family support networks, with her ageing mother-in-law for instance having to look after ten children having already seen three of her own children die: *"Her grandchildren remind her of the children she has lost".*

She also looks at problems caused by Ugandan inheritance laws. Because Noerine did not have a son, all her husband's property passed to one of his brothers when he died. In similar circumstances, some women and their daughters have not only lost their homes but all their possessions.

As well as being of great human interest, this book would be worthwhile reading for anybody working with Ugandan families affected by HIV.

Published by Women and AIDS Support Network (Zimbabwe). Available from **TALC** (Teaching-aids at Low Cost), PO Box 49, St Albans, Herts AL1 4AX (tel. 0727 53869).



from: We miss you all

• **HIV infection and children in need, edited by Daphne Batty.**
This important new collection draws on the experience of a wide range of professionals working with children affected by HIV/AIDS. Its coverage includes clinical issues, legal implications, social work perspectives, bereavement, and the development of appropriate services for black families. Examples of good practice are discussed, and case studies of adoptive families dealing with HIV are presented.

Available from **British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering**, 11 Southwark Street, London SE1 1RQ (tel. 071 407 8800). £9.99.

• **Not under my roof: families talking about sex and AIDS.**
In this new book from **AVERT**, difficulties associated with talking about sex within families are explored by parents and children in their own words. In the chapter on HIV and AIDS a number of interesting points are raised, such as the difficulty of talking about

Children and HIV: Guidance for local authorities has now been issued by the Department of Health. The National Forum on AIDS and Children was involved in the consultation exercise for the Guidance, and some of the comments we made on the draft have influenced the finished document.

The guidance *"is intended to assist social service departments and other organisations offering relevant services in developing their policy with regard to children and HIV".* Among the areas covered are:

* confidentiality: *"before information about his or her HIV status is disclosed, the child's consent should be sought wherever the child is of an age and understanding to provide it".*

* testing.

* counselling.

* training: *"It should be made clear to all prospective carers... that any child placed may be infected with HIV without the knowledge of the local authority. Discussion of the issues around HIV should therefore form an integral part of their initial preparation and training".*

* day care: it is *"not necessary for staff working in day care settings to be informed about a child's HIV status".*

* domiciliary care.

* residential care.

* child protection.

* fostering: *"other than in highly exceptional circumstances, foster carers will need to be fully informed of the child's HIV status in order to promote the child's physical and emotional well-being".*

* adoption: *"[HIV] testing should never be carried out as a routine examination prior to adoption or simply at the request of the adoptive parents".*

Information is also included on the relevance of the Children Act 1989, the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, and other legislation.

Available from: DH Store, Health Publications Unit, No 2 Site, Manchester Road, Heywood, Lancashire, OL10 2PZ

I C A T I O N S

HIV in a personally engaging way. One 17 year old complains: *"I could talk to Dad about it on a scientist's level but not on a sexual level"*. The book costs £12.95 from **AVERT** (address below).

• **AVERT** have also published a 14 page colour booklet called **AIDS and Children: What's it got to do with them?** Aimed at adults, it includes such topics as "how can children become infected with HIV?" and "Listening and talking with children".

Details from: **AVERT**, 11 Denne Parade, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1JD (tel. 0403 210202).

• **Brook Advisory Centres** have produced three full colour, comic format safer sex leaflets for use with young people. The leaflets, **Cool it!**, **Do you come here often?** and **Whatever turns you on!** aim to *"encourage young people to see giving and receiving sexual pleasure in terms other than through penetrative sex"*.

Details from: **Brook Advisory Centres**, Education and Publications Unit, 153a East Street, London SE17 2SD.

• **HIV/AIDS: what do we say to children?** and **HIV/AIDS: what do we say to young people?** are two leaflets for parents and carers. As well as some basic information about HIV/AIDS, they offer advice on how to discuss the subject with children and young people.

Available from: **Islington HIV Unit**, 159-167 Upper Street, London N1 (tel. 071 477 2574).

from: HIV/AIDS: a guide for carers...

• The first issue of **HINT** , the newsletter of the National HIV Nutrition Team, includes a review of recent literature on nutrition in children with HIV.

Available from: Stephen Hare, **National HIV Nutrition Team**, c/o the Interface Partnership, High Street, Hatfield Broad Oak, Essex, CM22 7HE. (free)

• **HIV/AIDS: a guide for carers of young children** has been published by **Lambeth Women and Children's Health Project**, Geared towards the needs of carers in Lambeth, Southwark, and Lewisham, it covers basic HIV/AIDS information, HIV testing, caring for children, confidentiality, and hygiene (a hygiene poster is included), as well as providing a resource list.

The authors hope that as well as presenting clear factual information for parents and others caring for children, the Guide will be used as a basis for policy development in both the voluntary and statutory sectors.

Details from: **Lambeth Women and Children's Health Project**, Unit 135, Brixton Enterprise Centre, 444 Brixton Road, London SW9 8EJ (tel. 071 737 7151).

The importance of developing services relevant to the needs of children and young people is recognised in the **Health of the Nation Key Area Handbook on HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health**, a new publication from the Department of Health.

The Health of the Nation White Paper, published in July 1992, identified HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health as one of five Key Areas. This handbook aims to act as a guide to assist those developing local strategies in relation to this Key Area.

The handbook states that services to people with HIV should aim:
"- to meet individual preferences whenever possible.
- to be sensitive to differing cultural and personal circumstances.
- to respect the need for individual autonomy, dignity and confidentiality."

It is acknowledged that *"infected women and children need accessible services to be developed to meet individual and family needs"*. Here, as elsewhere in the handbook, examples of local initiatives are provided. For instance, reference is made to those authorities which *"are developing family clinics where all family members can receive out-patient care at the same time with appropriate links to inpatient and community care services and support if necessary"*.

Among other services required by children and families, the handbook identifies:
"- a network of local childminders prepared to provide emergency or respite care during bouts of parental illness, as well as regular day care facilities.
- childcare facilities for hospital attendances...
- arrangements for adoption and fostering."

In addition it is recognised that *"Uninfected family members, including children, will also need a variety of support services"*.

Published January 1993, available from: BAPS, Health Publications Unit, Heywood Stores, No 2 Site, Manchester Road, Heywood, Lancashire OL10 2PZ

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The National Forum on AIDS and Children is committed to promoting the rights of children and young people affected by HIV. In the UK to date, only limited work has been undertaken specifically on this subject. However, as Neil Orr briefly outlines here, there is a wealth of material on the rights of children, and to a lesser extent on the rights of people with HIV, which can usefully inform work in this area.

□ Children's rights were given recognition in international law in **the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, and ratified by the UK government in 1991. Many of the Articles of the convention are of potential relevance to children affected by HIV. For instance, Article 12 affirms the right of children to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and to have these views given due weight and consideration, while Article 24 deals with health (see box). Article 16 deals with the child's rights to privacy, which Peter Newell has suggested is relevant to confidentiality and the child's right to control access to personal information[1]. A draft **European Charter on the Rights of the Child** is being discussed by the European Parliament[2].

> ***"the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment and rehabilitation of health"***
> **Article 24, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

□ In England and Wales, **the Children Act 1989** gave statutory recognition to the rights of some children to be kept informed and consulted about their wishes or feelings, to give or withhold consent to treatment, and to have their religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background properly regarded. Furthermore, Section 1 of the Act states that *"the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration"* in questions concerned with the child's upbringing.

□ Other rights have been established in English case law. For instance, in the Gillick case in 1985 the House of Lords recognised that in some circumstances children under the age of 16 may consent to medical treatment without parental consent. In the judgement, Lord Scarman stated that the parental right to decide on a child's medical treatment *"terminates if and when the child achieves sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable him or her to understand what is proposed"*[3].

□ Although not legally binding, Department of Health guides on **Welfare of children and young people in hospital** (1991) and **Children and HIV: guidance for local authorities** (1992) both include a recognition of children's rights in particular areas. For instance, the former states that *"Like all other patients, children have a right for their privacy... [and] an equal right to information appropriate to their age, understanding and specific circumstances"*, while the latter affirms the child's right to consent (or not) to an HIV test, and to the disclosure of confidential information provided they are of *"sufficient age and understanding"*.

□ Children's rights have also been recognised by professional associations and in the policies of agencies working with children. For example, the British Paediatric Association has issued **Guidelines for the ethical conduct of medical research involving children** (August 1992) which states that *"Even when it is not legally required, researchers should obtain the assent or agreement of school age children to their involvement in the research"* and that *"even very young children"* should *"be informed as fully as possible about the research in terms they can understand"*.

The Leicester Royal Infirmary has adopted a Young People's Charter which includes *"Respecting young people's right to independence"* and *"Planning care and treatment in partnership with the young person"* [4].

□ The rights of people with HIV have been addressed in **the United Kingdom Declaration of the Rights of People with HIV and AIDS**[5], launched by self-help groups and AIDS service organisations. This is *"a synthesis of all the rights which the UK government has agreed, in international treaties and covenants, to uphold for its citizens, together with proposals for implementation of those rights with reference to people with HIV and AIDS"*. Among the rights considered are those to privacy, to freedom of movement, to housing, food, social security, medical assistance, and welfare, to protection from discrimination, and to education.

1. Newell, P (1991), *The UN Convention and children's rights in the UK*. National Children's Bureau
2. For the full text of the draft European Charter, see *Childright*, July 1992.
3. For an overview of the legal situation see: Viinikka, S, Children looked after away from home: some legal implications, *in* Batty, D ed. (1993), *HIV infection and children in need.* BAAF
4. Burke, T. (1993), Inhospitable, *Young People Now*, March, no.47. **Action for Sick Children** are preparing an information leaflet on the rights of young people going into hospital.
5. Details from Ceri Hutton, **National AIDS Trust**, 6th Floor, Eileen House, London SE1 6EF.

U. S. NEWS

□ Motherless Children

Attention in the USA has recently been focused on the impact of AIDS on children left motherless by the epidemic. A new study has estimated that by the end of 1991, 18,500 children had been left motherless by HIV/AIDS, with hispanic and black communities being hit the hardest. In New York alone, where AIDS is the main cause of death amongst women 15 to 44 years of age, 7,500 children have been affected in this way. The study estimates that these numbers could double by 1995, and that *"unless the course of the epidemic changes dramatically, by the year 2000, the overall number of motherless children and adolescents will exceed 80,000".*

The authors of the study note that many of these children will *"face futures beset by uncertainty and instability, separation from siblings, and unrecognised and unaddressed grief".* They suggest that *"Unless increased attention and resources are devoted to this vulnerable population, a social catastrophe is unavoidable".*

Michaels, D. and Levine, C. (1992), Estimates of the number of motherless youth orphaned by AIDS in the United States, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 268, 24, Dec 23,30.

□ Research Controversy

There has been controversy in the US over the decision of Congress to insist that the National Institute of Health shift money from adult to paediatric HIV research. Paediatric AIDS now takes about 40% of the federal budget for testing new drugs for AIDS, although children account for less than 2% of US AIDS patients.

As a result of this decision, some adult clinical trial programmes have had to be cut back. Meanwhile, critics have claimed that the paediatric funds will not be used effectively, as the relatively small number of children with AIDS limits the amount of research it is practical to do. The Washington Post suggested the decision reflected *"Congress's far greater enthusiasm for funding to benefit children rather than drug users and gay men who make up the bulk of the AIDS population".*

The Pediatric AIDS Foundation has been lobbying for extra funds for children for several years. They feel that the needs of children have been overlooked to date. However, Elizabeth Glazer co-founder of the Foundation, has said that she wants extra funding to be allocated to the NIH budget rather than money being redirected away from adult trials: *"You cannot take money away from these programs, because they don't have enough".*

British Medical Journal 10 October 1992, *Washington Post* 5 October 1992.

□ Vaccine Trials

Trials are due to start shortly to evaluate therapeutic vaccines in pregnant women. The vaccines consist of harmless genetically engineered fragments of HIV ("envelope proteins" known as gp 120 and gp 160). The hope is that injecting these into the body might stimulate an immune response that will act against genuine HIV in the body, improving the mother's health and reducing the chance of the child becoming infected.

Similar trials are planned using the vaccines in babies newly-born to mothers with HIV, who will receive the vaccine at three intervals - at birth, at four weeks, and at eight weeks. The first phase of the trials will evaluate the safety of the vaccines. At present about 15% of children born to HIV-positive mothers are infected with HIV.

AIDS Treatment Update December/January 1993, *Guardian* 13 February 1993.

The Scottish Child and Family Alliance (SCAFA) has appointed Sarah Morton as the Development Officer for its Programme on Children and Families affected by HIV/AIDS. The project aims:

-to promote wider awareness of the needs of children and families affected by HIV.
-to establish a network of professionals working in this field from health, education and social services.
-to stimulate policy and practice development, and to identify gaps in policy and service provision.
-to address consumer needs and promote consumer empowerment.
-to provide up to date information to those working in this area in Scotland.

SCOTTISH CHILD AND FAMILY ALLIANCE
S·C·A·F·A
CLANN AGUS TEAGHLAICHEAN AN ALBAINN

This project is a development of the work of the Scottish Working Group on Children and AIDS/HIV, set up by SCAFA in August 1991. It will be working closely with the National Forum on AIDS and Children, feeding the experiences and concerns of Scottish agencies into the UK Forum and vice versa.

For further information, please contact: Sarah Morton, SCAFA, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG (tel. 031 228 8484).

COURSES AND CONFERENCES

15 - 16 April 1993: **Child care workers and HIV**, Edinburgh. Two day course organised by the Paediatric AIDS Resource Centre, 25 Hatton Place, Edinburgh EH9 1UB. Contact Alison Argus at PARC, 031 668 4407.

26 - 27 April 1993: **Children and HIV infection**, London. Two day course organised by PACE, an independent HIV training organisation. Details from PACE, 67-69 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6BP (tel. 071 251 2689).

21 May 1993: **Scientific update on HIV infection in children**, Edinburgh. Details from PARC, 031 668 4407.

2 June 1993: **HIV/AIDS: What about the children? Developing a child centred service**, Leicester. One day conference organised by Leicester County Council Social Services Department in conjunction with the National Children's Bureau. Details from: Christine Dodd or Annita Eddison, Social Services, Divisional Sub-Office, Towers Hospital, Gipsy Lane, Leicester LE5 OTD (tel. 0533 460460).

6 July 1993: **National Forum on AIDS and Children**. Regular Forum meeting, venue to be arranged.

27 - 29 July 1993: **AIDS and HIV: working with older children and teenagers**, London. Three day course at the London Lighthouse, 111-117 Lancaster Road, London W11 1QT (tel. 071 792 1200).

7 - 10 September 1993: **2nd International conference on HIV in children and mothers**, Edinburgh. Organised by the Paediatric AIDS Resource Centre. Details from PARC, 031 668 4497.

14 October 1993: **Support for families of women and children with HIV**, London. Organised by the RPMS Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology with the Terrence Higgins Trust. Details from: Course and Symposium Office, RPMS Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital, Goldhawk Rd, London W6 0XG (tel. 081 740 3904/3922).

The National HIV Prevention Information Service produce a regular list of courses on conferences on all aspects of HIV. Contact Sara Thomas, 071 724 7993.

PLACEMENT NEEDS

For two days in January, the Thomas Coram Foundation hosted a seminar, organised jointly with the National AIDS Trust and Barnardo's Positive Options, focusing on **the Placement Needs of Children Affected by AIDS/HIV**. The seminar looked at the issues for fostering and adoption services relating to HIV and AIDS, bringing Family Finding staff from a range of statutory and voluntary agencies face to face with HIV workers from their own localities. These two groups were encouraged to learn as much as possible from each other, and to plan a collaborative approach for the future.

A dramatic presentation from the Common Body Theatre company, featuring a young man whose mother has AIDS discussing his feelings, engaged the participants emotionally from an early stage. Presentations highlighted the needs of people affected by HIV, and of particular groups such as refugees and Irish people, and examples were given of flexible care packages attempting to meet these needs. Some of the difficulties in implementing good practice were discussed, such as finding foster carers of the appropriate cultural background.

A recurring theme was that it is often the wider consequences of HIV, rather than simply the nature of the disease itself, which are causing concern - including such issues as confidentiality, long-term illness or placing children from minority communities. A central question was whether we should be developing new adoption and fostering services specifically for HIV, or improving recruitment and training to attract more families to a more flexible general service.

Future plans arising from this seminar include circulating notes and recommendations from the event; a follow-up day for foster-parents; and continuing a programme of events in different parts of the UK. For further details contact Huw Meredith at the National AIDS Trust, 071 972 2845.

FUTURE ISSUES OF CHILDAIDS WILL INCLUDE:

Updates on social, legal, medical and other aspects of HIV and children.
Information on new services, publications and events.
Reports on the ongoing work of the National Forum on AIDS and Children.

It is hoped that members of the National Forum on AIDS and Children, and others involved with children and HIV, will use **ChildAIDS** as a forum for discussion, debate and information exchange. If you would like to write about the service you provide, or about some other issue of concern, please contact the editor (details on page two).